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## Hernawan, Budi. *Torture and Peacebuilding in Indonesia: The Case of Papua*. London and New York: Routledge, 2018.

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**Hernawan, Budi. *Torture and Peacebuilding in Indonesia: The Case of Papua*. London and New York: Routledge, 2018.**

In an era when a successful candidate for the office of President of the United States of America has stated, “I would bring back waterboarding, and I’d bring back a hell of a lot worse than waterboarding,” we need serious studies of torture. Fortunately, former human rights worker and now lecturer at Jakarta’s Driyarkara School of Philosophy, Budi Hernawan offers us such a work. *Torture and Peacebuilding in Indonesia: The Case of Papua* draws from over a decade of field-work (1997-2009) conducted in this massive and all too often violent province in the country’s far eastern Melanesian territory. Hernawan provides clear evidence of the Indonesian government’s institutionalization of torture as a means of governance. While his data is as depressing as it is persuasive, the author does offer suggestions for a way out of seemingly inescapable and systemic violence. His model for peacebuilding is a modest strategy for fostering a climate in which human rights can be established in Papua.

In seven chapters totaling some 226 pages (excluding the index), Hernawan carefully constructs a powerful argument for the Indonesian state’s institutionalization of torture as a central means of governance. The author lays out the structure of the book in a clear and methodical manner and frequently reminds the reader of his framework. Drawn from a dissertation completed at the National University of Australia in 2013, the book does have moments at which it reads like a doctoral thesis, especially when it presents its sub-arguments in numbered lists. But this is really a very a minor criticism of what is for the most part well-crafted and extremely clear prose. When *Torture and Peacebuilding* engages theory, Hernawan’s clarity will be appreciated by many readers. The book draws heavily from Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva, and Johann Metz. Throughout the text, Hernawan systematically returns to each theorist to explain what he calls his “Torture Dataset.” Combing data and theory, he declares torture in Papua to be theater, something done in public not only to punish but also to demonstrate state power to a wider audience.

After a brief acknowledgement section, the first chapter, “Locating torture in Papua,” introduces the book’s argument and structure and explains why torture in Papua is so important. There were three regions in Indonesia that challenged the post-colonial state’s unity, East Timor, Aceh, and Papua, all of which agitated for independence. With the collapse of Suharto’s authoritarian New Order in 1998, the new President Habibie surprisingly offered an independence referendum for the province of East Timor, which had been under a quarter century of genocidal occupation. Despite violent intimidation from the Indonesian Army (TNI) and collaborating local militias made of up street-thugs known as *preman*, the Timorese overwhelmingly voted for immediate secession. Despite the TNI’s scorched-Earth withdrawal, East Timor is Southeast Asia’s newest nation-state. As one of the last areas to be conquered by the Dutch (and arguably never completely pacified), Aceh saw decades of armed ethno-religious rebellion. The devastating 2004 tsunami and the massive recovery effort brought both sides to the negotiation table. In the space of a few years, a system of regional autonomy kept Aceh within the secular Republic of Indonesia but allowed it to adopt its own interpretation of Sharia law. When it came to Papua, Jakarta has steadfastly refused to consider anything that might challenge state-sovereignty. Hernawan explains this intransigence by referring to the colonial and post-colonial construction of Papua as a Kristevan “abject,” something apart, disgusting, and outside the bounds of the norm. When dealing with the abject, the Indonesian state is not constrained by legality. Indeed, extra-judicial violence is standard operating procedure for the

TNI and the police. The book notes that the Freeport corporation is a major foreign investor in Papua, but the text fails to explain the incredible wealth that this mining operation draws out of the province. This is the one area in which this otherwise outstanding book falls short.

The second chapter, “Reconstructing Torture: Sovereign Power, Abjection, and *Memoria Passionis*,” expands upon Hernawan’s theoretical triad of Foucault, Kristeva, and Metz. Chapter three, a history of political violence in pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial Papua, reveals Hernawan’s Foucauldianism in its title, “A Genealogy of Torture,” as do the subsequent chapters “The Anatomy of Torture” and “Theater of Torture.” In these sections, the book presents its excellent research. The author skillfully parses out the definition and experience of victims, survivors, perpetrators, witnesses, care-givers, and beneficiaries. While respecting the confidentiality of his informants, Hernawan paints a portrait of Indonesian rule in Papua in which the state communicates its sovereignty through the public infliction of physical pain on individuals. That this torture is not hidden differentiates it from examples such as the French army in Algeria, the military junta in Argentina, and Americans in the basement of the Abu-Ghraib prison. Through his case studies, he argues for the possibility of agency of survivors and witnesses. His data shows that the vast majority of torture is inflicted on Papuan highland men by the TNI and the national police. When women are tortured, sexual violence is prevalent. Hernawan is careful to note that his data is limited by the context of Papua’s pervasive violence. During his field-work he, as a Javanese human rights worker, was often viewed with suspicion and hostility from both the TNI and national police and the local population. The last major chapter offers a modest path out of the theater of torture. By creating “islands of peace,” the model of human rights can slowly spread. While peace-building occupies half of the title, this is not the strongest section of the book.

This book works in multiple registers. In the context of contemporary Indonesian politics, where numerous New Order figures including Suharto’s children are political figures; in the context of contemporary Southeast Asia, where the Filipino Duterte can run death squads, the Cambodian Hun Sen can jail his political opponents, the Burmese army can engage in genocide, and the Thai junta can suspend democracy with impunity; and in the context of the contemporary world order, where President Trump can nominate a former torturer to head the Central Intelligence Agency, this is an important book. As Hernawan argues, even in democracies such as *refromasi* Indonesia and the United States of America, torture remains an issue we must confront.

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